

Justice Scalia to Speak at Snake River Basin Adjudication Celebration in Boise

MOSCOW, Idaho – June 23, 2014 – U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia will provide the keynote address at an upcoming conference and celebration in Boise marking the conclusion of the Snake River Basin Adjudication process. The event, sponsored by the Idaho Supreme Court, the Kempthorne Institute and the University of Idaho College of Law, will be held Aug. 25-26, 2014 at the Boise Centre on the Grove.

The conference will begin with nationally known water law experts discussing the historic adjudication of surface and groundwater rights in Idaho's Snake River Basin, which began in 1987. A reception, Justice Scalia's address and a ceremonial signing of the final unified decree will follow. The conference will wrap with a panel discussion of the future of water policy.

Former Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne, who invited Justice Scalia to attend the celebration, said he is thrilled to have such a distinguished leader provide the keynote address.

"Justice Scalia's return to the state of Idaho is greatly welcome," Kempthorne said. "I had the pleasure of meeting him as governor and was honored to have him swear me in as Secretary of the Interior. The Justice's writings, scholarship and jurisprudence have long been admired by Idahoans, and it is an honor for us to have him help us celebrate one of this nation's major achievements in water management. It will be a personal pleasure for me to welcome him back to Idaho."

Idaho Supreme Court Justice Roger Burdick, who presided over the Snake River Basin Adjudication, said he looks forward to the event and the longtime partnership it recognizes.

"On behalf of Idaho's citizens, its lawyers and its judiciary, we could not be more excited to celebrate not only winding up the largest adjudication of its kind to be completed in the nation's history, but also to welcome Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia," Burdick said. "Justice Scalia's impact and intellect are well documented and bring gravitas to this celebration of cooperation among the Idaho legislature, numerous governors' offices, and the Idaho judiciary in our effort to catalog Idaho's water rights."

Idaho Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter also welcomed Scalia back to the state to celebrate the historic achievement.

"The Snake River Basin Adjudication is a milestone for the State of Idaho as well as a stellar example of how water rights can be adjudicated and managed successfully where the state, water users, tribes and the federal government have all been able to reconcile strongly held views of this most precious of Idaho resources," Otter said.

Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden said Idaho is honored to have Scalia attend the event.

"As the Snake River Basin Adjudication concludes, Justice Scalia represents the SRBA's intersection of the water as the lifeblood of the land and the rule of law as the lifeblood of our nation," Wasden said. "The resolution of more than 158,000 claims through the SRBA reflects the rule of law as the bedrock of Idaho."

University of Idaho President Chuck Staben said, “The UI’s involvement in the Snake River Basin Adjudication project is a point of pride and of great importance for us. We are national leaders in water law and natural resources research, and we value the opportunity to collaborate with our state’s leaders and with our nation’s leaders to wisely manage our water resources now and into the future.”

Registration for the event will be available by mid-June.

About UI

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